

~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~

EXCLUSIVE EYES ONLY

T O P S E C R T SENSITIVE 230455Z OCT 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUNKER)
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER SAIGON 0229 FLASH
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR GENERAL HAIG
HAK TO 50

1. I HAVE ASKED BUNKER TO REPORT MORE FULLY ON THE CONVERSATION WITH THIEU THIS MORNING, AND THE CABLE TO GUAY GIVES YOU MY STRATEGY WITH RESPECT TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE. THIS MESSAGE WILL TELL YOU WHAT I BELIEVE SHOULD BE OUR INTENTIONS OVER THE NEXT WEEKS.

2. I SHOULD HAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE AS SOON AS THE NORTH VIETNAMESE REACTION IS CLEAR. I WOULD TAKE THE FOLLOWING LINE. IF THE OTHER SIDE HAS NOT REPEAT NOT GONE PUBLIC, I WOULD SAY THAT WE ARE WORKING DILIGENTLY TOWARD A SETTLEMENT AND HAVE MADE MAJOR PROGRESS. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY NEWS STORIES, NONE OF THEM FULLY ACCURATE, AND I WILL NOT GO INTO SUBSTANTIVE DETAIL SO AS TO PRESERVE THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. I WOULD POINT OUT THAT AT THE END OF NEGOTIATIONS THERE ARE ALWAYS DETAILS TO BE IRONED OUT AND DIFFERENT PROBLEMS IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS. I WOULD STEER ALL FOCUS AWAY FROM THIEU AS BEING THE PROBLEM.

IF THE OTHER SIDE HAS GONE PUBLIC, I WOULD SAY THAT THE AGREEMENT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF AND THAT WE ARE STILL TRYING TO WORK OUT THE FINAL DETAILS. AGAIN I WOULD MAKE A MAXIMUM EFFORT TO KEEP THIEU FROM BEING THE TARGET, AND WOULD MENTION THE PROBLEM OF THE ENTIRE NORTH VIETNAMESE FIELD ARMY BEING IN THE SOUTH.

IN EITHER CASE I WOULD TAKE THE POSITION THAT MAJOR PROGRESS IS BEING MADE AND THAT I AM CARRYING OUT THE PRESIDENT'S FIRM INJUNCTION NOT TO WORK AGAINST ANY DEADLINE. I WOULD SAY THAT THE FUTURE OF THIEU WAS NOT THE ISSUE, BUT WOULD REFUSE TO GET INTO DETAILS ON CONTENT IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE NEGOTIATIONS.

3. AS FOR THE SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE ANOTHER PRIVATE SESSION WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE. WE WOULD MAKE A MAXIMUM EFFORT TO GET FROM THEM SOME CONCESSIONS, EVEN IF ONLY COSMETIC, SO AS TO ENABLE THIEU TO SAVE FACE. BUNKER WILL BE TALKING TO HIM IN THE MEAN-TIME. IF THIEU STILL BALKS WE WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER A BILATERAL DEAL. THIS WOULD BE EITHER TO EXTRICATE OUR FORCES, WHICH WOULD HAVE MANY DISADVANTAGES INCLUDING THE LEAVING ASIDE OF LAOS AND CAMBODIA; OR ESSENTIALLY THE SAME DEAL WE NOW HAVE WHICH THE DRV AND U.S. WOULD RECOMMEND TO THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PARTIES WITH THE UNDERSTANDING WITH THIEU THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT IT RELUCTANTLY ON THAT BASIS.

4. IN VIEW OF THE COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS WE HAVE BEEN HAVING I WANT TO EMPHASIZE AGAIN THAT THIS PROCESS WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT GET INTO GEAR TILL NEXT WEEK, BUT IT SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BEFORE MID-DECEMBER.

5. WITH REGARD TO THE AUGMENTED MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR THIEU, PLEASE BE SURE THAT WE STOP EVERYTHING THAT IS UNDER OUR CONTROL AND SLOW DOWN THE REMAINDER SUCH AS THE F-5'S.

WARM REGARDS.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

State Dept. review completed

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